

21/10/6
10/6
ELEGIAC THOUGHTS, 1

occasioned by the

DEATH 1507/365

of

The Rev. D. Simpson, M. A.

OF MACCLESFIELD, IN CHESHIRE.

To which are added,

SHORT EXTRACTS,

from his most

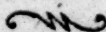
APPROVED PUBLICATIONS.

The whole giving a general View

*Of the Principles, Writings, and Zeal, for the Cause
of Vital Godliness,*

of that

EMINENT SERVANT OF CHRIST.



He being Dead yet speaketh.

Paul.

By JOSEPH NIGHTINGALE. K



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1799.

4/10/18





Preface.

I am not certain, that my presumption, in pretending to say any thing concerning such a great man as the late Mr. Simpson, will altogether please the public. I am, nevertheless, happy, in having a consciousness of purity of motive, in what I have done, and if I do little or no good; I cannot do any harm.—I have done my best, with a good intention, at least, and, I feel pretty easy about consequences.

My sole reason for making the short Extracts was, a desire that the principles contained in them might be the more

known and spread. An enemy to spiritual tyranny myself, I care not if all the world were so too.—The time is fast approaching, when, what is now done in a corner, shall be published on the house top, and the infidel, shall no longer have to state priest-craft, as an objection to religion. May God hasten the time! The Deists themselves, have done much towards the commencement of that happy period—The Unitarians deserve our warmest thanks—The Quakers our imitation—The Calvinists our approbation—and the Methodists, all the support that lies in our power. But, let us observe, that

Zeal is a fire and useful in its kind ;
But, nothing is more dangerous if blind.

A zeal, not according to knowledge, will do immense mischief, let us proceed with cautious steps, keep steady to our princi-

ples; yet avoid, as we would avoid hell fire, every appearance of ill-nature, or illiberality one towards another. Let us love as brethren and shew that we have one common cause at heart, namely, that of delivering the minds, and consciences of men, from the tyranny of religious establishments. And whilst we do nothing unlawfully, or in a spirit of revenge, no doubt but the great Head of the church, will lend a gracious ear to our prayers, and grant us every lawful request.

Let us be importunate with God, that he would send faithful labourers into his vineyard, men truly endued with the spirit of wisdom, and understanding, who shall lift up their voice like a trumpet, who shall cry aloud and spare not, but shall declare unto Israel her sin, and unto Judah her

transgression, so shall the knowledge of the Lord soon cover the earth, as the waters, the face of the great deep, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, Amen, and Amen.

Manchester,
MAY 18th, 1799.



Elegiac Thoughts, &c.

MOURN christians mourn, your heavy loss deplore :
The wise, the virtuous Simpson, is no more.
Man's last grand enemy, grim death, hath laid
His icy hand upon his sacred head.
Our country's glory, and our country's boast,
Simpson the great, is levell'd with the dust.
Ye happy saints, who sat beneath his word,
Heard him exalt his Master, and your Lord :
Ye best can tell, with what undaunted zeal,
He sought the public, and the private weal !
With what unwearied diligence he strove
To spread the wonders of Redeeming Love !
Filled with love divine, himself, he knew
All might with love divine, be filled too :
He, therefore, with a soul-enlivening call,
Cry'd, " sinners, Jesus gave himself for all !
" For all ! for all ! the bleeding Saviour di'd,
" For all ! for all ! the Lord was crucifi'd."'
Many, and happy were the souls who found
Salvation, in the heart-reviving sound,

Nobly gave credence to the words which flow'd,
 From the blest lips of this great man of God :
 Thrice happy souls ! who liv'd by faith below :
 Di'd in the faith, then quit this vale of woe,
 And now compose the jewels of his crown,
 Give praise to God, and thank him for his Son.
 But Simpson's love was not confin'd alone
 To those, whose views exactly met his own ;
 Slave to no sect, he took no private road ;
 But look'd through Jesu, up to Jesu's God.
 He pray'd that parties, names, and sects might fall,
 And Christ, his suffering Lord, be all in all.*

* Simpson speaking of the Roman Catholics breathes some noble sentiments...as a proof of his liberal spirit, I shall here quote them.

" They compass, literary compass sea and land to make proselytes. Nor are they to be blamed for so doing. The very attempt is praiseworthy : for religion is either all, or is nothing. And he that is in earnest for salvation himself among the Roman Catholics, should upon his own principles make all the converts to his religion he can. Nor ought we to wish him deprived of this or any other privilege, civil or religious, which he may enjoy under our present lenient government. On the contrary, it would be happy for the nation at large, as it seems to me, if all human shackles were removed from the minds of men, every civil penalty on account of religion abolished, and Christianity left to stand or fall by its own intrinsic excellence. It wants nothing but fair-play. Human mixtures pollute it. Human aids disgrace it. Nor will it ever universally prevail, till it is purged of all absurdities attached to it by superstitious and ill-informed men. Pure Christianity and perfect liberty will grow up and prevail together. The former is the gift of heaven, the latter the birth-right of men. Perfect liberty to profess what we think right in all the concerns of religion is the unalienable privilege of reasonable creatures. And perfect toleration of every profession, with impartial protection held out to every denomination, would be the glory of any civil constitution. These blessings Britons enjoy in a large degree. But the full possession is probably in reserve for the millennial reign of the Messiah. So far however as we are personally concerned, what hinders but that every man may even now anticipate these halcyon days? Why may not faith, and love, peace, and joy, forbearance and universal benevolence, occupy every bosom? When will the time come that names, and sects, and parties shall fall, and sincere Christians of every description leaving all infe-

Empty opinions, oft the drunkard's toast,
 The zealot's glory, and the bigot's boast ;
 However right themselves, are always found,
 If love be absent, a mere tinkling sound ;

rior considerations to be settled at last by the Judge supreme, shall meet together with mutual good-will, in public worship or private intercourse, on the broad bottom of the Gospel-covenant? The points wherein we agree are much more important than those wherein we differ. We are contented to leave the Jews, Heathens, and Mahometans to the judgment of God. We do not think it right to teaze and persecute them for their opinions. Much rather should we rather exercise forbearance towards every denomination of Christians. We all embrace the bible. We receive it as the sole criterion of religious truth. We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Ridiculously divided in the church militant by silly and unimportant distinctions, we all expect to worship together and to be of one mind everlastingly in the church triumphant. Why then should we have bitter envying and strife in our hearts towards each other now? How much to blame are we, to worry one another for such insignificant peculiarities. Is it not the natural privilege of every man living to worship God according to his own light and convictions? And has not he the same right to interfere in our religious views, that we have to interfere in his!

I know not how it is, but I confess though a clergyman of the Establishment, I see no evil in going for public worship or social intercourse, with any of the denominations of Christians. I hear what passes with candour, join where I approve, and reject whatever appears contrary to scripture and the plain dictates of reason and common sense. I am well aware this comes not up to the full standard of orthodoxy. But if such a conduct constitutes a man a bad churchman, I feel not anxious to be accounted a good one. All the Sectarists seem to me to have much that is praise-worthy among them. And though I am not acquainted with any that I could join myself with full approbation of mind, most of them appear to embrace all the essentials of the doctrine of salvation. And if God will approve, why should I disapprove? Intolerance is to me the darkest feature in Popery itself. Nor is any character so truly disgusting, as that of a hot-headed, infallible bigot, let his party principles, and professions, be what they may. It is this spirit that has deluged the world with blood, rendered Christianity the scorn of infidels, and the bane of human happiness. Instead of being the messengers of peace, the ministers of the Gospel, have often proved the scourge of Christendom. We much mistake if we suppose there is no Pope but his Holiness of Rome. Under a pretended renunciation of the abhorred principle, there is a spirit of infallibility prevailing in all ecclesiastical establishments, and a certain disdain of those who presume to call in question their respective claims. I

Religion, pure and undefil'd, is this,
 To help the widow and the fatherless,
 Whilst crouds are daily into ruin hurl'd,
 To keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
 These, were the blessed truths which Simpson taught,
 Truths—with substantial consolation fraught.
 Nor did he only teach them, for he knew
 By blest experience, what he taught was true.
 Happy himself, it was his sole intent,
 To spread that happiness, where'er he went.
 And often has he heard the suppliant's cry,
 And caus'd the widow's heart to dance for joy.
 His views disinterested, his motives pure,
 This friend, and benefactor of the poor,
 Long'd to diffuse a kind benevolence :
 Witness his sermon on Beneficence.
 He saw with grief, the vices of the age :
 The Chace, the Turf, and the licentious Stage.
 And zealous for the interests of his Lord :
 He usher'd forth, the threatenings of the word,
 Anak's tall sons, stood struck with conscious awe,
 Whilst Simpson fly'd the thunders of the Law.
 They heard, and felt the quick and powerful word,
 The violated law, the two-edg'd sword,

add too, that the same dogmatical spirit prevails in no small degree among the several parties of Dissenters. Protesting, however, against all such imperious pretensions, wherever they appear, and in devout admiration of the modest and liberal genius of the Gospel, I would give the right hand of fellowship to all denominations of Christians, and say,...Grace be with all them, that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!"

Key to the Prophecies Preface, IX. X.

The trumpet's piercing sound, the thunder's roar,
 In short, they felt, what they ne'er felt before :
 The rock was smitten, and they knew their woe,
 And forth, the briny streams began to flow.
 Whilst with up-lifted eyes, to heav'n they cry'd
 " O Father ! look upon the crucify'd,
 " And, for his sake, be merciful to me,
 " For I am griev'd, for having grieved thee."
 The prophet heard them groan beneath their load,
 The broken law of an offended God.
 With joy he saw their penitential tears,
 With grief, their conflicts, and their 'boding fears.
 And, glad he cry'd, " for You the Lamb was slain !
 Only believe, and ye shall now be clean. }
 Believe—his blood can wash your every stain. }
 His righteous soul, was vexed to behold
 Those luke-warm Christians, neither hot nor cold ;
 Who live amidst the blaze of gospel day :
 And yet, can lounge their precious time away.
 Idly repeating precomposed creeds,
 Or, telling of their former virtuous deeds,
 Yet in reality, are grov'ling moles,
 Singing a requiem to their half-starv'd souls.
 Simpson, who counted all things dung and dross,
 When brought in competition with the cross,
 Felt keenly for, and mourned over these
 Mistaking souls, thus settled on their lees :
 Urg'd them to part with all, and Come to Christ,
 Their King, their Prophet, their atoning Priest.
 But did the Pulpit bound his usefulness ?
 No, his arduous labours from the Press

Shew, how he sought, with unremitted pain,
 The dearest interests of his fellow men.
 Religion's general cause he had at heart,
 Nor, with one jot or tittle could he part.
 His contests with the Deists of the age
 Declare, how much he priz'd the sacred page.
 He saw with sorrow hell's triumphant reign
 O'er the mistaken proselytes of Paine,
 He saw—and strove to break the cruel chain. }
 Nor were his strivings fruitless, for he saw
 Some brought to own the justice of the Law :
 Some, who were hurrying the downward road
 That leads to death, and hell, return to God.
 And though the Lord that bought them they'd deny'd ;
 Yet, when in spite of self to God they cry'd,
 They found redemption in the crucify'd. }

Here let the muse describe a set of men,
 Who often felt the rod of Simpson's pen.
 Men—who by some unlucky "pious fraud,"
 Have found their way into the church of God.
 And, though my pen be rather dipt in gall,
 It is but that I may the louder call.
 And should I sharply speak, 'tis little more,
 Than good old Latimer hath said before*.

* Latimer's words are---"O that a man might have the contemplation of hell,---that the devil would allow a man to look into hell to see the estate of it :---if one were admitted to view hell thus, and beholding it thoroughly, the devil should say ; On yonder side are punished UNPREACHING PRELATES. I think a man should see as far as a kenning, and perceive nothing but unpreaching prelates ; he might look as far as Calais, I warrant you."

Sermon, 8 vol. 1 p. 155. Lond. 1791.

Concerning dull "*unpreaching prelates*,"—Priests,
 As void of God, as the voracious beasts.
 Those idle drones, who only teach by proxy,
 And good for nothing, save their orthodoxy,
 Mere epicures, voluptuous debauchees,
 Who but regard the flock, to gain the fleece.
 And notwithstanding all that Paul hath said,
 Have but a name to live, whilst they are dead.
 Simpson, who always thought immortal souls
 Of greater value than full flowing bowls :
 Saw how these foxes spoil'd the tender vines,
 And cuttingly reprov'd these dull divines.
 But here the swelling floods began to rise,
 And clouds of calumny o'erspread the skies,
 To see their crimes held forth to public view,
 Most shockingly enrag'd the reverend crew,
 And strongly it was rumour'd up and down,
 That Simpson should be "*stripped of his Gown*."
 Poor shift indeed ! the silken robes to rent,
 As substitute, for solid argument !
 Yet often used by the sable crowd,
 Those mere dead weights upon the church of God.
 But 'tis not meant this should be understood
 Of those who *labour* for the public good ;
 No ; blessed be the power of saving grace,
 There are a few amongst this fallen race,
 Who faithfully dispense the living word,
 And keep not back the counsel of their Lord,
 To these the hand of fellowship he reach'd,
 Whate'er their name, or wheresoe'er they preach'd.

Or in the temple, to a noble crowd,
 Or to the poor, upon the public road,
 No matter where, if souls were brought to God. }
 Simpson, with unaffected zeal inspir'd,
 Greatly these ministers of Christ admir'd.
 Ever obedient to their Lord's commands,
 They see his pleasure prosper in their hands,
 Hell's kingdom shakes, and Satan's mighty holds,
 Are broken by a host of praying souls.
 Simpson, with these rejoiced to proclaim }
 The efficacious power of Jesu's Name,
 In the waste places of Jerusalem.

But ah! he's gone! Christians your loss deplore,
 The good, the useful Simpson is no more.
 No more—to listen to the mourner's cries,
 No more—with tempted souls to sympathize,
 No more—to recommend the Saviour's blood,
 No more—to ornament the church of God.
 But let us check our grief, nor dare complain,
 What's loss to us, is his eternal gain.
 "A Man is dead," we weeping mortals mourn;
 Yet angels shout, "Behold a Child is born!"
 Lodg'd in the bosom of the sinners friend,
 His pain's all gone, his trouble's at an end,
 And far removed from a world of sin;
 He's now with God eternally shut in.
 Regardless of a mortal's smile or frown,
 He wears unrivall'd now, a glorious crown.
 Clad in the beautiful, the heavenly dress
 Of the Redeemer's Blood, and Righteousness—

When stars shall fade away, "and the bright sun
 Grow dim with age," and Nature's glass be run,
 When the huge mountains, from their seats are hurl'd,
 "Beings on Beings wreck'd and World on World,"
 The dear departed saint, unhurt shall stand,
 Secure beneath the great Redeemer's hand.

And now great God! thy weeping Zion see.
 Fly to her help, for oh! she waits for thee.
 Let not our Brother's Charge, forsaken die,
 Nor long, as sheep without, a shepherd be,
 But guard them, as the apple of thine eye. }
 In their behalf, almighty God appear,
 Lest some devouring wolf, the flock should tear,
 Lest some poor sordid wretch, from virtue free.
 Should lead these new-born souls, astray from thee,
 Send them a Pastor, who shall soothe their woes,
 And Macclesfield, shall blossom as a rose.

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Short Extracts, &c.

*** O ***

IT has been thought by some, and asserted by others, that Mr. Simpson was an enemy to our constitution and government—that his principles were revolutionary; and consequently inimical to the laws of his country. It is beyond a doubt, he was a zealous advocate for reform, wherever he saw reform was necessary, for the better establishment, of the civil, or religious liberties of his countrymen. And what real friend to his country is not? But they are blockheads with a witness, who, on every attempt to reform what is really amiss; will raise the old hackneyed cry, “*Innovation!*—“*The Church is in danger.*”—“*The men who turn the world upside down are come hither also!*” Those are the greatest enemies to their country, who, making large pretensions to religion, loyalty, &c. would sit folding their arms in careless security, whilst their country is in the utmost danger, and every thing that is dear to Christians, or to Britons, on the verge of destruction and ruin. Mr. Simpson, however, was no great admirer of these sleepy friends of their country; yet nevertheless he was at the same time an ardent lover of our constitution, and an advocate for Government by King, Lords, and Commons. Let him speak for himself.

After having made several quotations from Dr. Priestly's various Publications: Mr. Simpson proceeds to observe, " It is evident from these several declarations, that Dr. Priestly is straining every nerve to subvert the constitution of this country. Every man therefore who is satisfied with the present state of things, and wishes not for a return of the puritanical times, or to see this kingdom involved in the horrors of a civil war, as is now the case with our neighbours, should take all proper steps to counteract the insidious designs of the Doctor and his friends. Till very lately, the members of the Establishment seem to have been asleep dreaming no danger is at hand, while they are sowing their tares, laying their trains of gun-powder, dispersing their inflammatory pamphlets, and exerting all their influence to make the common people dissatisfied with the conduct of their governours. They meet, associate, raise funds, advertise, buy books, and spread them gratis to all who are disposed to read them.* I could earnestly wish some measures of a similar kind were adopted by those who are the friends of the present constitution, in all our populous towns, where Dissenters are particularly busy in their seductive arts.

* I particularly desire the reader to understand me right here, and not to suppose, that, because I quote Mr. Simpson's words, respecting the conduct of the Dissenters in a *many* instances; that I *altogether* disapprove of their proceedings, far from it. I have always admired the *zeal* of the Dissenters in their opposition to what appeared to them oppressive, or tyrannical. I myself am a Dissenter, and I freely give them the right hand of fellowship, in all their *lawful* attempts, to throw off the intolerance of Religious Establishments.

Though every man who thinks at all upon the subject, must see there are several things in the constitution of this country, which might, possibly, be altered for the better, yet, I believe, there is good sense enough among the great bulk of the people, to discover when they are well and happy. They will not therefore be disposed to risk a certainty for an uncertainty. They will be content to wait, "doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with their God, and not speaking evil of dignities," till Providence shall think proper to meliorate the state of things. Some government there must be. Some persons must be in power. The simple question therefore is, whether we shall continue our present mixed form, of King, Lords, and Commons, which has been considered by many of the most experienced politicians as the perfection of government, or whether two of the branches of the legislature shall be swallowed up by the third, and we reduced once more to a commonwealth, with a few tyrannical despots at the helm of affairs.

"A vast majority of the people are well satisfied with our present governours. And every man that is so satisfied, should endeavour to diffuse his own peaceful sentiments among the people all around him."

Mr. Simpson after recommending a few books on religious subjects, and expressing a wish that it were in his power to send them into every family where the Dissenters are endeavouring to spread their principles :

proceeds thus, "If it be enquired whether I myself see no need of a reformation?—I ingenuously answer—I do.—And whether I am *perfectly* satisfied with the constitution of this country both in church and state?—Certainly not.—Many things, in my judgment, might be altered for the better. And I doubt not but such melioration of the state of things will *gradually* take place. But I see no defects of that magnitude to render it adviseable to convulse the kingdom, and plunge ourselves into a civil war, for the sake of them. We have much to lose, and little to gain. A peaceable, temperate, internal reform of the decayed parts of the constitution, whether in church or state, is what no real friend to his country could have no solid objection to. The Constitution has already received many such from the spirited efforts of individuals, from the combined talents of united patriots, and from the progressive wisdom of ages. But then these improvements have been dictated by experience, and guided by prudence."

In a note Mr. Simpson observes that "Whoever considers well the dreadful convulsions which were perpetually taking place in the Grecian and Roman commonwealths, and weighs thoroughly the vast superiority of this country to all the commonwealths now in being, both in riches, power, freedom, and happiness, will have little inclination to risk a change. The woman in Prov. xiv. 1. is not spoken of as the wisest of women, who "plucked down her house with her own hands," to save others the trouble. And should the

inhabitants of this country be persuaded to do like her, instead of the kingdom of God immediately appearing, (which many of our canting enthusiasts seem to think would be the case) a very Babel would arise in consequence. If the experience of the present wrong-headed levellers in France, those philosophical deists, and athiests, (as Dr. Priestley informs us they most of them are) and if, moreover, the experience of the last century in this kingdom cannot make us wise, most certain it is, that we never shall become so. Happy are they whom other people's misfortunes make wise and cautious. Some of the greatest men in France have been deceived in their unhappy business. Many of the same description were last century deceived in this country. And the Italian proverb says, "If a man deceives me *once*, it is his fault; if *twice*, it is mine." Let us not hesitate, therefore, between a legal and mild government under King George, and a usurped government under a mob of petty tyrants, with some wretched Cromwel at their head.

If we are called to look at America as a model of a happy government—I reply—Let us wait a century before we give a decided opinion upon that subject."

See Strictures on Religious Opinions, p. 167—173.

I think the above extracts sufficiently prove that Mr. Simpson was indeed a friend to our present constitution, and although I would by no means be understood as making his sentiments *exactly* my own, or that I cordially agree with *all* that is said in the foregoing extracts, yet they answer the intended purpose in giving

the reader a general view of Mr. Simpson's political principles. He was a great man, and a good man, but great men and good men may be mistaken. Nevertheless, Mr. Simpson was in reality a friend to liberty, and an avowed enemy to corruption and injustice of every species. What he says concerning that damnable traffic, the slave trade, together with his opposition to pluralities in church livings, sufficiently shew him to be at once a real friend to liberty, and an enemy to corruption and injustice. Hear him.

“The slave trade is a business somewhat similar to the bloody persecutions of the Roman Catholics. The principle is, indeed, different, but the act is much the same. The constant annual consumption of these poor creatures is reckoned at about 60,000.

In the year 1768 the number of slaves bought on the coast of Africa was 104,100. Of these 53,100 were bought by British merchants. The number in the West Indies has been said to be belonging to England and France, 796,500. The Abbé Raynal states the whole number in America and the West Indies at 1,400,000. He says, moreover, that the total importation from Africa since the first beginning of the slave-trade, is 9,000,000 of slaves.”

“I observe upon this horrible account, that the business of the slave-trade alone, if we had no other national transgressions to answer for, is enough to sink all the nations in Europe, concerned in that

diabolical traffic, in utter ruin and destruction. The method of obtaining...the mode of conveying them to market...the brutality observed in disposing of them...and the treatment abundance of them meet with in their servitude...What heart that is not incurably hardened in iniquity, but bleeds for their dishonour and their sufferings?...Is there a God that judgeth the earth? Then, England, look to thyself! As thou hast done, so shalt it be done unto thee....I would say, when speaking of my fellow creatures at large with the excellent Fenelon, 'I love my family better than myself; I love my country better than my family; but I love mankind in general better than my country.'

Key to the Prophecies, Page 347—348

But his sentiments will be best discovered as an enemy to corruption and injustice, if we read his "Plea for Religion, &c." a work not long since published—a work which does honour to its author, and which ought to be read by all real friends to the establishment. We will here transcribe a part of that excellent work.

After having mentioned some of the objections which the deists of the day raise against religion, Mr. Simpson proceeds:

"Others again take offence at the absurd doctrines of the several religious Establishments in Christendom. They discover in them certain peculiarities which they conceive to be irrational. They confound the

doctrines of these human institutions; (which were formed in the very dawn of the Reformation, while men's eyes were yet scarcely opened enough to discover truth,) with genuine Christianity."

"Some there are again, who seeing the pomp and pride of many of our Bishops and dignified Clergy, how they in direct opposition to the whole spirit of the Gospel, the example of primitive clerks, as well as their own holy profession, scramble for emolument, and heap together from two to half a score lucrative pieces of preferment, while several thousands of their brethren are destitute of the ordinary comforts of life, without further examination, naturally suppose that religion is all Priest-craft and self-interest, honour and conscience, having nothing to do in the business.—It may be of use to state this more at large.

It is well known, that there are about 18,100 clergymen in England and Wales, of the established religion, and near 10,000 parishes. The Rectories are 5,098; the Vicarages 3,687; the livings of other descriptions 2,970; in all 11,755.

Twenty or thirty of those livings may be a thousand a year and upwards; Four or five hundred of them five hundred pounds a year and upwards: Two thousand of them two hundred pounds a year and upwards: Five thousand of them under one hundred pounds a year. The average value of Livings is about one hundred and forty pounds a year, reckoning them at 10,000.

As these things are not very generally understood, we will be a little more particular.

In the year 1714, when Queen Ann's Bounty began to be distributed, there were,

1071	Living, not more than	10 pounds a year.
1467		20
1126		30
1149		40
884		50
In all 5597		50 pounds a year.

All the 10 and 20 pounds Livings have now been augmented by the above donation.

This bounty is about 13,000 pounds a year clear of deductions, and is, therefore, equal to 65 augmentations annually at 200 pounds a piece*.

The whole income of the Church and two Universities is 1,500,000 pounds a year. There are 26 Bishops, whose annual income is 72,000 pounds: Each Bishop, therefore, has on an average 2,770 pounds a year, supposing he had no other preferment.—There are 28 Deaneries and Chapters, whose income is about 5000 a year each, making together about 140,000 pounds.—The income of the two universities is together about 180,000 pounds a year.—The 18,000 clergy have together about 1,108,000 pounds a year

* The Clergy are indebted to Bishop Burnet, for this application. The money itself arises from the first fruits and tenths of church-livings, above a certain value, which before the time of Henry the 8th, used to go to the Pope.

among them, which is little more than 60 pounds a piece. These clergymen and their families make about 100,000 souls, that is about an 80th part of the nation, and have upon an average, about 11 pounds a head to subsist on annually. And reckoning the population of England and Wales, at 8 millions of people, every clergyman would have a congregation of 444 persons to attend to, in the same way of calculation.

There are moreover, 28 Cathedrals, 26 Deans, 60 Archdeacons, and 544 Prebends, Canons, &c. Besides these there are in all about 300 in orders belonging to the different Cathedrals, and about 800 Lay-officers, such as singing men, organists, &c. who are all paid from the Cathedral emoluments; so that there are about 1700 persons attached to the several Cathedrals, who divide among them the 140,000 pounds a year, making upon an average near 83 pounds a year a piece.

The whole income of the *Kirk* of Scotland, was, in 1755, about 68,500 pounds a year. This was divided among 914 Ministers, and on an average made 72 pounds a piece per annum.

Upon a general view of these matters, when it is considered, that all the Bishoprics, Prebendaries, Deanries, Headships of Colleges, and best Church-Livings are occupied by a smaller number, in all pro-

bability, than an eightieth part of these Clergy, what a deplorable situation must a large share of the remaining seventeen thousand Ministers be in, especially under the present advanced price of most of the common necessaries of life? And then, it is curious enough, that these Church-Dignitaries, who are in possession of several thousands a year per man, have made laws, that the inferior clergy, who are destitute of most of the comforts of life, shall not be permitted to follow another calling, whereby to better their condition, and get bread for their families....Why do not the poor Vicars and Curates of the country, make a common cause, and associate together in one body against their oppressors? Why do they not address their King, who is temporal Head of the Church, or the Legislature of the Land, to take their circumstances into consideration? One man...not a doit better than his brethren...shall enjoy 20,000 pounds a year...another 15,000...another 10,000...another 5,000...another...3,000...another 2,000...another 1,000.

One shall heap Living upon Living, Preferment upon Preferment...to a vast amount...merely because he has got access...too often by mean compliances...to some great man...while his more worthy brother is almost in want of bread for his children. The late Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, if my memory does not fail me, was possessed at the time of his decease, of ten or more different Preferments. He was Bishop... Head of a College... Prebend... Rector... Librarian, &c. &c. &c. and all this bestowed upon him not be-

cause he was a more holy, useful, and laborious man, than ordinary; though a man of merit and talents; but because he wriggled himself into favour with certain great persons, who had influence with men in power. Instances of this kind are not uncommon. They are, however unjust, unpolitical, unchristian. No wise Legislature ought to permit such abuses of religion out of the question. They are inconsistent with every thing that is decent or proper, while so many valuable, learned, laborious, humble, modest men are pining in want. I know well that reflections of this kind are calculated to disoblige those who are interested: but, regardless of consequences, without the least dislike to any man living, or the smallest view to any one individual, or a wish to have any thing better for myself, and actuated only by a love to truth, and the advancement of our common Christianity, I, for one, protest in the face of the sun against all such abuses. And I, moreover, solemnly avow, that the spirit of the present times is such, that unless these, and similar disorders are rectified, by the wisdom of the Legislature, the whole ecclesiastical fabric in this country, will, ere long, be as completely overturned, as that in France has been. Nothing can prevent it but a speedy and thorough reformation. Let the Bishops of the land then, as first in dignity, be first in this good work. Let them make a merit of necessity, and resign voluntarily, what they cannot long possess in safety. Let them make an offer to their King and Country of withdrawing from the

Upper House, resigning all their *secular* honours, and commence genuine ministers of the Gospel. Let them renounce their several pluralities, and quietly retire into their respective dioceses. Let them come and live among their clergy—go about doing good in all humility through their several districts, preaching the Word of life among the people, after the example of the great SHEPHERD and BISHOP of souls, and his APOSTLES. Let them renounce their pomp and splendour, and set their faces against all monopolies of Livings, against non-residents, against all immoral, disorderly, and irreligious clergymen; and let them be the avowed friends and patrons of laborious pastors, in particular; and of good men of every description, in general. Thus the Church of England would soon become more than ever, the glory of all Churches, and the Bishops of that *Church* would be the glory of all Bishops.

It is not to be doubted, that men possessed of the loaves and fishes will laugh at all this as visionary and enthusiastic.—Be it so.—I have only to reply—*Look at the Bishops and Clergymen of France!*—Happy are they whom other people's misfortunes make wise and cautious! The fate of the *Jewish* clergy of old, and of the *French* clergy in our own times, comes like a peal of thunder, preaching reform and moderation to the clergy of every country.

You see, *my Countrymen*, that I, for one, give up all these abuses as indefensible. But be it remembered,

that whatever means divine Providence may use to correct them—for corrected they must be—the Gospel of Christ is not to be blamed for them; it gives them no countenance; it predicts their rise, continuance, downfall; and denounces nothing less than condemnation against all those who pervert the *Divine Ordinances* to secular purposes. It is neither Popes, nor Kings, nor Bishops, nor Clergymen of any inferior description, that shall escape the just sentence of the universal Judge. He will make no distinction. He knows no difference between man, but what moral and religious qualifications make. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Mighty sinners shall be mightily punished. Eminently good and useful men shall be eminently rewarded.

To this head let it further be added, that discerning men, observing the conduct, character, and precepts of the SAVIOUR of the world, and comparing them with the conduct and manners of our *Church Dignitaries*, cannot help seeing a very striking contrast. His kingdom was not to be of this world: But the conduct of our Bishops is in a great measure, secular. His meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him. *He literally went about doing good.* He preached every where, and to all descriptions of men. He was never weary of contributing to the happiness of his country. He was frequently in the *Temple*, but never in the *Palace*, unless when dragged thither by force. Our learned Prelates however are so occupied in the

great council of the nation; in dancing attendance at Court: in guarding their secular emoluments from waste; in visiting the nobility and gentry of the land; and in other worldly engagements of various descriptions; that they have but little time left, either for reading the scriptures, for private retirement, or for preaching the Gospel to the poor of the flock, in their respective districts*. To hear a Bishop preach is a sort of phenomenon in the country. And, if any of that truly respectable body of men—(some of whom are both great and good men, and independent of such considerations, I reverence them for their office sake)—do vouchsafe, once in a way, to indulge the people of their diocese, they usually affect such pomp and dignity in their manners, and their discourses are so dry and unevangelical, so ethical and heathen-like,

* Mr. Simpson in a note observes "Bishops ought assuredly to reside in their dioceses among their clergy, preaching in season and out of season; countenancing and encouraging the good; reproofing, exhorting, warning, punishing, the unworthy and immoral part of their clergy. The contrary to this, is however very frequently the case. If a man happens to have got a little more zeal than ordinary, and labours more diligently to do good than the generality of his brethren, immediately they are all in arms against him. And nothing is more common, than for his ecclesiastical superiors to frown upon him, to stigmatize him as a Methodist, and to oppose his interest in every way they can contrive. Whereas, a clergyman may be a man of pleasure and dissipation, gay, foolish, trifling; he may spend his time in the d versions of the field; drink, swear, and live as foolishly as the most foolish of his flock, and yet no harm happen. He is no Methodist, and, therefore, every favour shall be shewn him he can desire. Methodism is like the sin against the Holy Ghost; it is neither to be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come.

Be it, however, observed, that the increase of Dissenters, and the alarming spread of Methodism, are both entirely owing to the lukewarmness, or negligence, or disorderly conduct, or bigotry, or persecuting spirit of the Clergy of the Establishment. And there is no way under heaven of preventing the most mischievous consequences, but by adopting new measures, reforming what is amiss, and out-preaching, out-labouring, and out-living all our opposers."

that the poor hungry, gaping "sheep look up and are not fed." They are so horribly afraid of approaching too near the Methodists in their doctrines, that their sermons are most commonly cast in the mould of *Seneca* or *Epectetus*, than that of St. Paul. Hence they do no good. They never did, they never will do good with such "lean and flashy songs." Now and then, indeed, in the course of three, four, five, or six years, these *Shepherds of Christ's* flock parade through the country holding *confirmations*; but O where is the spirit of a CRANMER, a LATIMER, a RIDLEY, a KENN, a BEVERIDGE, a BURNET, or a LEIGHTON to be seen among them? Our *Ordinations* and *Confirmations*, though good in themselves, are painful ceremonies, as they are usually administered, to serious and enlightened minds. One can scarce blame a man for being an *Infidel*, when it is considered how these sacred Ordinances are frequently conducted. It is impossible the Gospel should be true, and the negligent part of our Bishops be in favour with heaven. If the Gospel be true-(which, if called upon in the course of Providence, I would humbly hope to glory in testifying, at the greatest possible hazard) then, woe, woe, woe, to many of the Bishops of England! May we not say of them, with too general application, but with some few honourable exceptions, indeed, as good old Latimer said of these right reverend gentleman in his day, "There is a gap in hell, " as wide as from Calais to Dover, and it is all filled "with *unpreaching prelates*."

Plea for Religion, &c. Page 36—45,

Again—in a note on pages 91 and 92 of the same work—"It is a melancholy reflection, that among all the clergy in this country, there were not quite 200 who sacrificed their interest to principle in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. See Gray's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, p. 238. In Charles the second's time, however, there were upwards of 2,000 clergymen, who sacrificed their interests to principle, besides a considerable number of conscientious men, it is to be presumed, who continued in their places.

Bigotry and persecution generally defeat their own purposes! What a consequence did not this mad measure give to the dissenting interest in England? The same foolish game was played by the Bishops and Clergy in the present century. Instead of encouraging, moderating, and regulating the pious zeal of a few young men in Oxford, by gentle and lenient measures, they shut their churches against them, and compelled them to go out into the highways and hedges to preach to those who were inclined to hear them*, and though they were then but a small band, they are now become a goodly company, and have already overspread England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, and the West Indies.—All this weight too

* In my opinion the Established Church of England never did the **CHURCH** of **CHRIST** more real service then when they "expelled the six young men the University, for reading, praying, and "expounding the Scriptures in a private house." See by all means a Sermon on the subject entitled "Priest-craft defended by the Shaver."

No thanks however to them : except such sort of thanks which the Jews of old deserve, who crucified the Lord of life and glory.

is thrown into the Dissening scale ! A few more such imprudent measures and down goes *Mother Church*.

We have spoken on a former page on pluralities and non-residence. The former, indeed, in all ordinary cases, implies the latter. We scarce ever read an account of deaths in the periodical publications, but we find an account of one or more instances of this nature. The poet MASON is a point in hand. Though a worthy man, and a character highly respectable, he had, it appears, accumulated several preferments in the church at the same time. And it is well known to be the custom for every clergyman in the Establishment* to procure as many as his interest will reach. This we call good management, prudent foresight, taking care of a family, and the like. If there is no God, it is all very well. But if we are accountable creatures, and are to exist in a future state, our present trading in Livings and Souls will not yield us satisfaction another day. It is popery, rank popery, the worst part of popery, under the highest pretensions to being the most pure and reformed part of Christ's holy Catholic Church.

I remember an anecdote apposite to the subject in hand. Bishop Burnet, in his Charges to the Clergy of his Diocese, shewed a great deal of disinterested integrity, by vehemently exclaiming against pluralities, as a most sacrilegious robbery. And in his vi-

* Mr. Simpson desired in one edition of the above work, that this should be understood with some exceptions.

sitation at Salisbury, he urged the authority of St. Bernard, who being consulted by one of his followers, whether he might accept of two benefices, replied—“And how will you be able to serve them both? I intend, *answered the Priest*, to officiate in one of them by a deputy.—Will your deputy be damned too for you? *cried the Saint*; believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must be damned in person.” This so affected Mr. Kelsy, a pious and worthy clergyman then present, that he immediately resigned the Rectory of Bemerton in Berkshire, worth 200 pounds a year, which he then held with one of greater value. See Bishop Burnets Life by T. Burnet, Esq.

We have observed, that all the bulk of church preferment, in this country, is engrossed by about one thousand clergymen, out of the eighteen thousand. I do not pretend to be accurate in this statement; but I should suppose it is not far from the truth. Whereas, the emoluments of the Establishment are capable of providing for 10,000 persons in a comfortable way, by abolishing pluralities, without disturbing the present order of things. Let every Bishop retire within his diocese, and dwell among his clergy, as a father in his family. Let every clergyman reside upon his Living, superintending his people, as a shepherd his flock. And let no man be promoted to the first Livings in the kingdom, merely because he is related to, or connected with some great personage; but let the most active, useful, and laborious ministers, especially when the infirmities of age come on, be accounted worthy

of double honour, by being rewarded for their extraordinary services with the best Livings the country affords.

All this, I too well know, is visionary. It is a plausible theory, but never will be reduced to practice. If it should please God, however, to put an end to the present unhappy war, and favour us once more with a settled state of things, I think it will be well for the great body of the poor Rectors, Vicars, and Curates of the country, to petition government to take their distressed circumstances into consideration. If it had no other effect, it would call the attention of the public to the horrible monopolies of preferments which prevail among the Bishops and higher Orders of the Clergy. I would recommend that Committees * should be formed in every district through England and Wales, to correspond with a grand and superintending Committee in London. Let them investigate the business of church-preferments thoroughly, and drag to broad day-light all the great offenders in this pretended spiritual commerce."

Thus we see that Mr. Simpson was not a lukewarm grumbler at what he conceived to be amiss; but an avowed enemy to corruption and usurpation wherever he found it.

* Why; the very mention of Committees would soon raise the old cry of "The Church is in danger!" I am very sensible that our "Right Reverend Fathers in G-d" would never suffer such heretical words to pass unpunished. They would sooner once more "cry havoc and let slip the dogs war," than they would part with one jot or tittle of their golden god.

Much more might be quoted from his different Publications to the same purport, suffice it that we give the sum of all in his own words.

“ The representation of the people in the House of Commons, though virtually good, is unquestionably defective. This, however, is only one of many abuses which call for reformation in the civil government of this country.

In the ecclesiastical department also the abuses are many, and extremely important. Our secular presentations to livings—our pluralities—non-residence—simoniacal contracts—hunting after preferment—attending the levees of the great—subscribing what we do not believe—neglect of the proper duties of our station for the performance of which we are preferred, and paid—our pride—sensuality—worldly-mindedness—covetousness—and penuriousness to that part of the clergy, who bear the burden and heat of the day—our very general departure from evangelical principles, reading and praying for one thing in the desk, and preaching another in the pulpit*—treating all serious godliness, even under a profession of it, as enthusiasm and fanaticism.”

Key to the Prophecies, p. 440.

Mr. Simpson was without doubt an able advocate for what are usually called, the distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity. It is however, well known he

* See a small Tract, entitled “ A Dialogue between the Reading-desk and the Pulpit.”

was no Predestinarian. Speaking of Mr. Toplady who says "It is not the smallest of my distinguishing mercies, that from the very first commencement of my unworthy administrations, I have not had a single doctrine to retract, nor a single word to unsay." He observes "Some of my readers will probably be of opinion, that it would have been much to this gentleman's honour to have retracted several of his doctrines, and unsaid many of the intemperate things which he advanced in the course of his polemical career."

Strictures on Religious Opinions. Page 186.

His "Primitive Faith Vindicated" sufficiently shew what were his views concerning God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. But these are too well known to require any repetition. His "Sacred Literature" shew how much he admired the Holy Scriptures as being "far superior to the most celebrated writings of antiquity."

Had it been the Will of Heaven to have prolonged his life, no doubt, but the world would have been favoured with much more of the labours of this industrious Minister.—But he is removed from the evil to come—he had already incurred the displeasure of many of the *great men* in the Church, and these would, if possible have crushed him to atoms if the arm of Omnipotence had not been stronger, than the persecuting spirits of wicked and designing men.

FINIS.



